

of 16, he joined the Crockett Fire Department as a volunteer and later went on to obtain an Associate of Arts degree in Fire Science from Columbia Junior College. While in college, Chief Thomas worked and lived at the firehouse as a member of the sleeper program. He eventually joined CalFire as a sleeper serving at the Twain Harte and Sonoma stations.

In 1986, Chief Thomas joined the Woodland Fire Department as a Firefighter after ranking first on their fire service test. His dedication to fire service and Woodland persisted while commuting from Crockett for his first year of service. Seventeen years after joining the Woodland Fire Department, Chief Thomas was promoted to the rank of fire captain in August of 2003. While serving in the Woodland Fire Department, he was acknowledged by the City of Woodland with a Proclamation for rescuing a victim from a house fire in zero visibility conditions.

Chief Thomas was promoted to battalion chief in December of 2012. He has been involved in many aspects of the Woodland Fire Department, including the Fire Department Honor Guard, Arson Investigation Team, and he is President of the Woodland Firefighters Association. Additionally, he built the department's first-grade program, an educational program dedicated to teaching kids about fire service. This program is still in use today throughout all schools in Woodland.

When not on duty, Chief Thomas loves spending time with his fire family and his non-fire family. He has also been a baseball coach for the last twelve years and enjoys volunteering.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Richard Thomas is deeply appreciated for his decades of selfless service and commitment to the Woodland Fire Department and our community. His efforts have made our district a safer and more enjoyable place to live. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

RECOGNIZING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, this spring, we mark the 30th anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act, known as FMLA. This groundbreaking law allows millions of workers to take unpaid leave from their jobs when necessary, without the fear of losing their jobs or being forced to choose retaining a job over the needs of themselves or their families.

Prior to the passage of the FMLA, there were no uniform laws or guaranteed leave for workers. None. In 1993, with bipartisan support, Congress passed, and President Bill Clinton signed into law, the Family and Medical Leave Act.

FMLA has remained crucial for workers all over the United States for three decades. It has provided workers across the country with 12 weeks of leave to care for a new child, an ill family member, or their own health. During this time, one's job is guaranteed. Unfortunately, FMLA leave is entirely unpaid, only

about 56 percent of workers are eligible for the program due to strict eligibility requirements regarding tenure and worksite size, it restricts the definition of family to exclude millions of caregivers, and the stark reality is that many workers cannot go without income.

As we celebrate 30 years of FMLA, Congress should recognize that paid family and medical leave is long overdue. The pandemic made crystal clear that the current patchwork system fails to cover many workers, especially low-paid workers, and harms our economy by removing millions of workers from the labor force and hundreds of millions of dollars in earnings. Limiting leave to those who can afford time off without pay harms workers of color and lower-wage workers, in particular. For example, Black workers are 86 percent more likely to be unable to take leave when they need to care for others or themselves. Indeed, 68 percent of Black women are the sole breadwinners in their households, making any loss of pay due to illness or caregiving a tremendous hardship. Families should not face the unethical choice of earning a paycheck or caring for their loved ones or themselves.

As the lead Democrat of the Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support, which has jurisdiction over paid leave, I am proud that House Democrats passed out of the House the first-ever, universal, comprehensive paid family and medical leave program. Had the Republicans in the Senate not blocked its final passage, this program would have provided all U.S. workers with up to 4 weeks of paid leave to address a serious personal or family health issue, or to care for a newborn or newly-adopted or fostered child.

Universal paid leave is not a gamble; we have decades of research from state and international implementation that comprehensive protections help businesses retain qualified workers and government support helps level the playing field for small businesses while supporting workers and strengthening the economy. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have passed laws to provide or require paid leave: Arizona; California; New Jersey; Rhode Island; New York; District of Columbia; Washington; Massachusetts; Connecticut; Oregon; Colorado; New Hampshire; Maryland; Virginia; and Delaware.

Research by the Rutgers University Center for Women and Work found that implementing universal paid family and medical leave would result in higher post-birth wages for women who take paid leave than for those that do not. Given that women are more likely to serve as primary caregiver and, therefore, are more likely to need leave, a federal paid leave program would strengthen the economic security of women. Additionally, research by Zero-to-Three found that the well-being of children would improve dramatically given the availability of parents to care for children and help obtain needed healthcare. Finally, the improved economic well-being of families would boost the economy and business revenue. In fact, paid leave policies creating gender equity would boost GDP by \$2.4 trillion by 2030, and policy allowing caregiving for older adults \$1.7 trillion by 2030.

I am proud to recognize my home state of Illinois is one of three states (i.e., Illinois, Maine, Nevada) that has enacted mandatory earned time off, a policy that is a substantial leap forward to universal paid family and med-

ical leave. The Illinois Paid Leave for All Workers Act will begin in 2024. It allows workers to accrue one hour of paid leave for every 40 hours workers, with a limit of 40 hours per year. Importantly, workers can use this leave for any reason, not just health care. I also am proud to recognize that ordinances in Cook County and Chicago proved that these policies benefit both workers and employers. This flexible time off for shorter life events coupled with paid family and medical leave for longer periods could substantially support workers, allowing them to remain in the workforce and advance their careers over time while still meeting the needs of themselves and their families.

We must take action to ensure equity for women, workers of color, and low-income workers through comprehensive, universal, paid family and medical leave legislation. Although my Republican colleagues have repeatedly blocked Democratic efforts to enact paid family and medical leave, I promise to continue to champion comprehensive paid family and medical leave legislation to give workers the protections they deserve that will strengthen families, communities, and our country. As we recognize the 30th anniversary of the Family Medical Leave Act, we must commit ourselves to moving toward a future in which all workers enjoy the right to paid leave.

HONORING TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of a special group of women from Transylvania University. Transylvania is located in Lexington, Kentucky and holds a special place in Kentucky history as the first institution of higher learning west of the Alleghenies.

Today Transylvania is honored for another place in history. The women's basketball team, under the direction of head coach Dr. Juli Fulks, won the NCAA Division III Women's National Championship. This is the first NCAA Championship in school history. The women completed a perfect 33-0 season and defeated Christopher Newport University 57-52 for the championship: Madison Kellione, from Harrison County, Kentucky, was named Most Outstanding Player of the NCAA Division III Tournament.

Members of the team include Amara Flores, Gracie Haywood, Madison Kellione, Keaton Hall, Sierra Kemelgor, Aubree Littlejohn, Sadie Wurth, McLain Murphy, Samantha Cornelison, Sydney Wright, Kennedy Stacy, Laken Ball, Kennedy Harris, Dasia Thornton, Micayla Hurdle, and Emile Teall. The coaching staff includes Juli Fulks, Hannah Varel, Loren Bewley, Tim Whitesel, and Lea Wise Prewitt.

This team and its perfect season, culminating in a championship, brings pride not only to the Transylvania campus, but to the city of Lexington and indeed the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I congratulate Coach Fulks, all the staff members, and especially the players on winning the NCAA Championship and having such a memorable season. I am proud to honor them before the United States Congress.